

X TRAINING AGENTS TO TEACH\*

A. Situation

A 4-H club agents' handbook which outlines objectives of 4-H work and describes extension methods is available to all 4-H club agents. This handbook is prepared by the State 4-H office.

Training schools have been held by the state 4-H office on a state or regional level to improve 4-H teaching methods.

Individual conferences have been held with 4-H club agents at the state office and in the county offices to assist the agents.

When visiting counties and observing county activities the activities are followed by discussion with the 4-H club agent relative to methods used.

In the subject matter field in which a specialist is available training is given to the agents by the specialist.

4-H club agents in Vermont are required to attend summer school for six weeks once every five years or for three weeks once every three years.

B. Problems

One of the major problems in teaching in the 4-H field in Vermont is the fact that a 4-H club agent trained in agriculture or home economics is expected to carry on an educational program in both fields. In spite of this handicap the agents are carrying out a commendable educational program through local leaders and with the cooperation of the specialists and other agents in the counties.

4-H clothing activities have been handicapped for some time as no clothing specialist is available. This has been a handicap in training local 4-H leaders, 4-H club agents and keeping subject matter up-to-date.

There is a growing feeling on the staff that the family life specialist should be included on the extension staff. It is the feeling of extension personnel, and the local leaders say they need more help on understanding the problems of young people and how to meet the situations which arise from these problems.

The nature of the 4-H club agent work is such that the promotional and educational activities are so time consuming that little time is left for adequate teaching activities.

*note* \*Vermont Agricultural Extension Service 4-H Plan of Work for Calendar Year 1950



### C. Activities Planned

#### 1. Training all 4-H club agents

Plans are under way with the field studies and evaluation division of the Washington office on a 4-H club agents' time evaluation study. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate present methods of 4-H Club organization and teaching in each county in carrying out an effective educational 4-H program. This study will be launched in April at the spring club agents' conference. It is the result of a growing concern among local, county and state 4-H workers over the amount of time required to carry out the 4-H Club program. After the survey information is compiled it is hoped there will be helpful information for the 4-H Club agents in organizing their county program more efficiently.

Each county in Vermont operated at least one week of 4-H camp last summer. These camps were attended by a total of 1500 4-H members. Camping is developing into a very important part of the 4-H program and is one place where excellent teaching can be conducted. Since camping is involving many professional and non-professional 4-H workers it seems desirable to plan a training school in camping objectives, philosophy and methods. Such a school will be held this April in conjunction with a camping program sponsored by the State Recreation Department. The 4-H people involved will be 4-H agents, local leaders and 4-H camp trustees. The program will be organized so that 4-H people attending will have the advantage of the general camping sessions sponsored by the Recreation Department as well as the special session on 4-H Camping.

Supervisory visits will be continued this year. These proved to be valuable in discussing methods used in 4-H teaching. When the state 4-H leaders visit county 4-H activities conferences will be held with the agent immediately following the activity to discuss methods used and suggest any desirable revisions noted.

Three of the 4-H agents will be attending summer school this summer. These three have elected to attend the three weeks' summer session. It is planned to ask the three agents to bring a report to the fall club agents' conference of information learned at summer school which might help all of the county 4-H club agents.

The subject matter specialists in both agriculture and home economics will be holding training meetings for 4-H club agents and local leaders throughout the state. These training meetings will present information on both subject matter and on methods of presenting subject matter to 4-H club members.

The 4-H club agents' handbook of 4-H methods and objectives will be revised and continued this year.

The state 4-H leaders will read the monthly reports of agents. These will be discussed with agents by letter or in person where suggestions or commendation can be given on teaching methods.



The major part of the fall conference of 4-H club agents will be devoted to the discussion of 4-H activities held in 1950. 4-H club agents will have an opportunity to evaluate these activities relative to their effectiveness in the 4-H educational and promotional program. They will have an opportunity to recommend the desirability of continuing or discontinuing any 4-H club activity.

The annual staff conference in December was devoted to visual aids which might be used by extension agents. The state 4-H office will cooperate with the 4-H club agents to make these visual aids available to them. The state office also will make slides available to the agents of state 4-H activities, and national 4-H events. A record describing a well organized 4-H camp week will be prepared for use by our county 4-H club agents. This record will stress in particular points of safety in a 4-H camping program.

## 2. Training new 4-H club agents

The following plan is followed when new 4-H club agents come to the state.

a. The state 4-H club leader accompanies new agent to his county on the first day of work. At this time the following is accomplished:

1. Introduce 4-H agent to other agents in the county, and to members of the office staff.
2. Discuss the general 4-H situation in the county and give the new agent some specific ideas on how to start his work.
3. Give the 4-H agent a copy of the Vermont Extension Service administrative handbook. Discuss this in detail and ask him to study it.
4. Give the agent the "Study Outline for New Club Agents" with the material to be used in the study.
5. Explain in detail the monthly report blank and why this is required.
6. Review the filing system with the agent and with the office secretary.
7. Plan with the agent the work which should be carried out during the first two weeks on the job.

b. After approximately two weeks in the county the new 4-H club agent spends two days at the State 4-H office. At this time the following is accomplished:

1. Give the agent an examination on the first half of "Study Outline for New Club Agents."



2. Introduce the agent to the president, dean, associate dean, heads of departments, and extension specialists. Plan for each specialist to spend some time with the agent giving him a general picture of the subject matter field.
3. Arrange for the agent to spend some time with members of the editorial office to receive help on circular letters, radio, news stories.
4. Give the agent some help on making farm visits and preparing and presenting extension talks.

c. State 4-H club leader visit the club agent in the county again not later than one month after the first visit. At this time the following is accomplished.

1. Give the second examination on "Study Outline for New Club Agents".
2. Spend more time with the club agent on the office files. It may be advisable to help the agent sort out materials no longer needed. The office secretary should be present so that she will have an understanding of the filing system which the new club agent desires to keep.
3. At this time it is well to review the information on making farm and home visits and to review some circular letters which have been prepared by the new 4-H club agent.

d. During the first four or five weeks in the county arrange for the extension editor to visit the county to give the club agent further help in preparing news items, radio talks, and to introduce the 4-H agent to the editors in the county.

e. State club leader visit the agent in the county after six to eight weeks. At this time (1) attend a club meeting with him, (2) attend a meeting where the 4-H club agent conducts the organization of the new club.

f. After about three months arrange for major specialists accompanied by the state leader to visit the county. These visits should accomplish the following.

1. Discuss the county situation in relation to the project.
2. What are some of the opportunities the 4-H club agent has in the county to organize an effective project activity.



3. Assist the agent in clearly defining his plan of work for the next few months.

g. State club leader spend about a day in the county just prior to the time the 4-H club agent makes his first annual report. At this time the state club leader will go over the report blank in detail showing the agent reasons for the report. Also suggestions will be given at this time for preparing a narrative report.

h. State club leader spend some time with the agent just prior to the preparation of the program of work. At this time the county committee which is appointed to assist in program planning should advise with the agent and the state club leader relative to plans for the coming program year.

i. When the opportunities are available for the new agent to receive values from state-wide meetings of any nature the club agent will be notified from the state office. If the agent can obtain help by visiting counties where club agents are carrying out successful 4-H activities this will be encouraged.

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